

Major James Morton

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THE

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1825.



## A DISCOURSE

*Delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden Sydney College, at their Anniversary Meeting, on the 24th of September, 1824. By JOHN H. RICE, D.D. Published in conformity with a resolution of the Society.*

(Concluded from page 9.)

THE remaining part of this Discourse will be employed in illustrating the objects designated by the Title of our association.

The value of Societies for the promotion of learning and philosophy has been so fully evinced, and is so well known, that this subject need not detain us for a moment. Such institutions convert the attainments and labours of the members into a common stock, of which each individual enjoys the benefit. This is a great advantage: But another, and perhaps a greater is derived from the countenance and encouragement afforded by the Association to every member in the pursuit of his chosen studies; and by the excitement produced when numbers meet together, all feeling a common enthusiasm in a noble cause. Nothing so carries men forward in their intellectual progress. It is an impelling power of great force. It is a temporary communication of genius. And if the impulse is often renewed, even ordinary minds under its influence make rapid advancement.

In selecting the objects to which our attention should be directed we have chosen to take a wide range, in the hope that sooner or later our Association would embrace great numbers; and to the end that free scope might be given to the enthusiasm of all.

We use the term *Literary* in distinction from *scientific*. Literature includes language as the means of expressing human thoughts and feelings; and the various particulars which grow out of the use of language, when cultivated and applied to intellectual purposes; such as *Eloquence*, *Poetry* in its various departments, the *Epic*, the *Tragic*, the *Comic*, &c. *History*, not as a record of political facts, but of men's thoughts, feelings and purposes, as expressed in language; *works of fiction* in the form of prose, and other things of similar kind.

From this statement brief and imperfect as it is, we see at once that this general division comprehends many subjects of great importance. It is erroneously supposed by many that



learning is mere knowledge of words ; and that all that is implied in literature is little more than a mere trifling about the arrangement of words, and the forms of sentences. On the contrary, it is in this way, we become conversant with man as an intellectual being ; we witness a development of his thoughts and feelings, his passions and affections, his tastes and mental habits. We are brought to an intimate acquaintance with all that is lofty in man's views and grand in his conceptions ; with all the forms of majesty and beauty, of grace and dignity that have been familiar to the greatest geniuses of every age. Such men as Homer and Virgil, Milton, Shakspeare and Cowper, Tasso, Dante and Ariosto ; and such as Demosthenes, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, Cicero, Sallust, Cæsar and Tacitus ; Burke and Chatham ; and such as Howe, Hopkins and Barrow : and, to go farther back and rise higher still, such men as David, Isaiah, and Paul, are brought into contact with us : we feel their mental power, rise on their imaginations, enjoy the beautiful creations of their fancy, kindle with their ardour, partake of their sympathies ; and in some degree are moulded into their intellectual and moral image. In a word he who is acquainted with the literature of a people, knows the mind of that people, whatever may have been its progress, with all its refinements and graces ; he knows the moral character of that people, as it is exhibited in their national ballads, their tales and fables, their comedy and tragedy, their novels and epics, the speeches of their orators, the dissertations of their philosophers, and the narratives of their historians. Surely a knowledge of mankind like this, is justly reckoned highly important. It gives a wide range to the thoughts, and elevation to the feelings. It is a fine preparative for the acting of one's part with dignity and propriety in any station to which man is called by his fellow-men. A most beautiful passage might be quoted from Cicero to show what pleasures are afforded by polite and liberal pursuits of this kind. It is doubtless familiar to every scholar, but such is its length that I forbear to introduce it here. It furnishes me, however, with an important part of my argument. These liberal studies are, in a high degree, subsidiary to virtue. Every man must by the very constitution of his nature, have something to create an interest in his mind, and exercise his affections. He cannot live without it. And either he will devote himself to those pleasures which are common to man with brutes ; or he will indulge in a degrading and sordid avarice ; or pursue the course of selfish ambition ; or be satisfied with the gratifications of learning and science—



unless indeed he should rise still higher and set his heart on the Source of all good. Warm hearted youth rarely feels the gripe of avarice or indulges in a debasing ambition. But alas, in that season the calls of passion are loud and urgent, and unless there are opened to the young, sources of pure and generous pleasure, they will drink of the troubled stream of sensuality, and swill in the sty of Epicurus. How happy is it for them, while surrounded continually by temptation, to have at hand, always, the facilities of pure and high enjoyment!—To be prepared for enjoying the sublimity of Homer and Milton, the tenderness of Virgil, or the warbling wood notes of “Sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy’s child!”—To hold high converse with the minds which have most adorned human nature, and have added to the dignity of man as an intelligent Being. This familiarity with the intellects of men who have been the brightest emanations from the Eternal Mind, that have ever appeared on earth is a mighty safeguard to virtue. He surely needs not an animal stimulus to quicken his spirits and enable him to bear the tediousness of time, who can rouse his mind and gratify his taste by such means as are always to be found in the storehouses of literature.

But it ought to be observed that studies of this kind prepare those who pursue them for enjoying in a high degree the pleasures of social intercourse. Men who love books, and delight in literary research always have interests and feelings in common; and can converse on subjects which create no unfriendly collision, awaken no bad passions, produce no debasing effects. The communion of minds replete with information, and refined by taste, is next in purity and sublimity to that of Christians in the interchange of fraternal love.

There is too a connexion between mental improvement and national prosperity, which deserves the most serious consideration of every patriot. The historians have always noted a decline of literature as one of the surest symptoms of decay in a state. Greece and Rome afford memorable examples of this. And one of the first tokens that modern Greece was rising to shake off her chains and break the rod of the oppressor, was afforded by her increased attention to education, and to the literature of the ancient age.

Indeed there must be a degree of intellectual elevation to capacitate a people for liberty. A grossly ignorant nation is incapable of self-government; and therefore cannot be free. They who must look to others to govern them are always slaves. The chains may be of silk or of iron; nevertheless they are chains; and they who wear them, are slaves. Still,



however, there must be government ; or all the miseries of anarchy will ensue. It is necessary then for the perpetuity of the republic that mind should be cultivated and improved : that there should be wise and faithful men to do the business of the people, and that the citizen should be so enlightened as to see the necessity of wholesome laws ; to understand when they are good and when bad ; and to feel the propriety of obeying them.

This hasty sketch will show the importance of literature to the well being of the country ; and the reasons why the society has made its cultivation a primary object.

Still, however, not at all to the exclusion of another department of human knowledge, which is justly esteemed in the highest degree important : I mean philosophy. And here it is necessary that I should employ a little time in explanation of the term, and showing the range of inquiry implied in it. The propriety of this is the more urgent, because many confine the term to a mere investigation of the laws of material nature, and a classification of the phenomena which occur in that department of creation : While others associate with the term the idea of a cold and unfeeling stoicism ; which regards pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, honour and shame, life and death with equal indifference. Of these two classes of persons, the former will find, on a little inquiry, that they have improperly restricted their views to a narrow range of thought ; and the latter will discover to use the language of Milton,

How charming is divine philosophy ;  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Philosophy teaches us to ascertain, and bring into a regular and digested order the various laws by which mind carries on its operations, and the changes in material nature are produced. This definition shows that the range of philosophy is wide, and that it seeks its proper objects every where throughout the material and spiritual creation. There is a philosophy of mind, a philosophy of language, of eloquence, of poetry, of history : or rather the philosophy of mind runs through these various departments ; so that they all afford means of forming an induction respecting the operations of that greatest of all created wonders the human mind. He who studies language merely for the words, he who reads poetry merely for the rhythm and cadence, only wastes his



time. But he who carries the spirit of philosophical research into these and similar subjects, deduces from them most valuable conclusions respecting the operations of intellect; and establishing principles on the firm basis of induction.

Indeed there is no department of human knowledge into which philosophy does not extend her researches. She is seen busily engaged in systems of legislation; and discovers how the great principles established in human nature operate on human laws; and conversely how laws operate on man, and modify his condition. It is also by pursuing researches according to rigorous philosophical principles that political economy has been reduced from a chaos of conjectures to something like the regularity of a system. In the same manner history is made to afford instruction both to the statesman and the private citizen; and has been changed from a mere narrative, such as it was in ancient days, into a most valuable source of information respecting the motives of men, and the causes of the revolutions which have taken place among civilized nations.

I can only glance at these important subjects on the present occasion. But even these few desultory remarks serve to show that the man who has not ascended into these higher walks of philosophy, does not deserve the name of a politician, is not fitted at all for the management of national affairs, and does not even know how to make the proper use of history.

Now if these things are so;—and no competent judge can doubt of them—this society will render important service to the state, by exciting and cherishing in the bosoms of its members a spirit of philosophical research.

It ought to be observed, too, that the student who investigates the laws of mind, and ascertains the principles of human nature, is alone prepared to understand the true principles of moral science. While others dogmatize, he reasons, While others theorize, he builds on the sure foundation of rigorous induction.

But if we descend from the higher parts of nature, and consider philosophy as conversant with material things, how vast and rich is the field which is opened to our research! Philosophy discovers those measures of beneficent wisdom, which the great Creator has adopted to regulate the movements and preserve the harmony of the whole system of nature. She ascertains the few simple laws by which worlds are held in connexion with worlds, and systems with systems; and she perceives the same mighty influence running through



every department in this great kingdom of Jehovah. The views presented here are of the sublimest character : not simply because of the grandeur and majesty of the objects ; but because we every where trace the operations of a mind, whose will is clothed with omnipotent energy, whose wisdom and knowledge reach beyond all limits, and at the same time are directed by a benevolence infinite and inexhaustible.

But when we confine our views to earth, we find an innumerable variety of objects, on which philosophy may exercise her skill, and among which she may pursue her investigations. The three kingdoms of nature abound in subjects. Minerals, vegetables, and animals, all afford abundant opportunities for the researches of the philosopher, and he is making continual discoveries, which not only gratify curiosity, but subserve the interest and comfort of man. I here speak things so well known, that it is waste of time to dwell on them.

But it is not duly considered by many among us, how greatly science aids industry and provides national wealth. Had it not been for two mechanics, the kingdom of Great Britain would have been utterly unable to make the efforts and take the stand which she has done during the last thirty years. I speak of Watt and Arkwright, who gave to their country the full use of the steam engine and of spinning machinery. It was by the application of philosophy to the mechanic arts, that these distinguished inventions were made. To select a single instance. Arkwright I think may be considered as the inventor of the spinning machinery. Now it has been calculated that this machinery produces more than could be produced by the manual labour of more than two hundred millions of hands. Here then is a clear addition to the productive labour of the country of that which equals at least one hundred and eighty millions of hands, without the expense of feeding and clothing them ! It has been calculated that the machinery at work in Great Britain is equal in the whole to 480 millions of hands. This, then, is an addition to the productive labour of the kingdom, of at least 460 millions of hands. It is easy to see that this must be a prodigious advantage. Another instance of the advantage derived from the application of philosophy to the use of man, may be instanced in the construction of steam-boats. I advert to this, on account of the very important effects of the invention on our own country. It affords facilities for intercourse, and for the carrying on of internal commerce, which will exert an important influence on all parts of this great nation. In effect, distance is almost annihilated. New-York is placed



near to Richmond; and Pittsburg is brought into the neighbourhood of New-Orleans. The citizens of different states feel their relationship; and are drawn together by kindness as well as by interest. The inhabitants of the western states, it may be added, find the advantage in the comparative cheapness of many of the comforts of life.

Hence it is apparent that all classes of citizens are deeply interested in the cultivation of the various branches of Natural Philosophy in their application to the arts. I will take a single and very simple instance which may perhaps more fully illustrate this truth. The man who first made knives and forks has added incalculably to the comfort of civilized life. But the science of Chemistry by inventing facilities for their manufacture has put it in the power of all classes of individuals to procure this convenience. In like manner, every article of clothing which we wear, and every part of our domestic apparatus, shows the interest which all classes of men have in the cultivation of Philosophical science. I have offered these remarks for the purpose of combatting an opinion but too prevalent in this country, that the institutions of learning and science are for the benefit of the rich. The truth is, that every class of society is deeply interested in them, and if the advantage belongs more to one description of persons than another, it is peculiarly to the poor; because cheapness is indispensable in the conveniences and comforts procured by them. If then the money which is every year employed by the state in tempting our fellow-citizens to acknowledge themselves to be paupers, were expended in the endowment and support of institutions, where the advantages of sound learning and true science might be fully communicated at a cheap rate; if practical philosophy in its various departments were duly cultivated, we should find a new impulse given to the mind of Virginia, her sons in every rank of life would gradually but certainly be awakened to a spirit of improvement; agriculture directed by science would enrich our exhausted plantations; every waterfall among our hills would furnish power for the movement of labour-saving machinery; every mountain would be compelled to render up its hidden treasures; and every stream would be a feeder for some canal on which our thriving and happy sons could see borne the products of industry and skill. Our bland atmosphere would no longer be poisoned by mephitic exhalations from undrained marshes; and extensive plains would no more be darkened by the sombre shades of the volunteer pine, where the mournful sighings of the western breeze,



awaken the lonely traveller in the midst of his musings to a sense of his solitariness. The fox would no longer burrow in the graves of our ancestors ; the screech owl and the great owl would no longer utter their dismal bodings in temples once vocal with the praises of the great Redeemer.

But above all the awakening of a right spirit is that which is indispensable to the preservation of our republic. An ignorant and vicious population cannot be free. This is now a first principle. We all know its truth. But if we do not feel its force and act under its influence, we shall each one in his place, be accessory to his country's downfall.

It is a fact, which, on account of the consequences with which it is pregnant, ought to be continually reiterated, that our population doubles in 25 years. How shall provision be made for the intellectual and moral improvement of these swarming millions ? Within twenty-five years from the present day provision ought to be made for the education of ten millions of young citizens. My countrymen, look along the line of time. Anticipate the future. Contemplate your country as filled with two hundred millions of citizens, educated, virtuous, manly, high-minded freemen ; all living under equal laws, all happy and ministering to each other's felicity.—Think with what power America will then be invested, what glory will surround her. The fairest forms that ever presented themselves to the eye of the poet, in the hour of highest inspiration, and when the most enrapturing visions broke on his imagination, do not exceed in grace, and beauty and glory, those which our country may assume in the enjoyment of a truly virtuous and well regulated liberty. But there is a painful contrast to this scene. It is mournful to behold, yet the sight may be salutary. Suppose then that ignorance and vice should extend their deadly influences—and that the mass of population should become the poor miserable victims of indolence and dissipation ; should be such creatures as we find on the margin of our great waters, or in the hearts of some of our interminable forests—what then would be the state of the country ? Where now the freeman raises his manly front, and shows a countenance conscious of inward dignity, and an eye beaming with intelligence we shall see the poor, abject crawling flatterer, the pander to a great man's lusts, the minion of power. Is this impossible ? Look at Rome. Where once the eloquence of Cicero poured its blaze of light and beauty ; and where once a higher spirit than he rose, refulgent from the stroke of Cesar's fate, and shook his crimson steel, and called on Tully's name, and bade the Father of his country



hail, for Rome again is free ; even there men who have dared to call themselves priests of the living God, and representatives of the meek and benevolent Saviour, under a hypocritical pretence of religion have ever forged chains for the mind, and bound the conscience in fetters. There slavery in the most degrading form has prevailed, and has branded with its disgrace the image of the Most High in man. Look at Greece, where eloquence moulded at will the fierce Democracy ; where Leonidas fought and Demosthenes spoke ; even there the cross itself has been the emblem of subjection ; and the descendants of Greeks have worn the chain even amidst the sepulchres of their fathers. Athenian and Spartan mothers have sent sons to serve in the palace of the Pachas, and daughters to the Seraglio. What has been, may be. Vice and ignorance will always pave the way for despotism and slavery.

Seeing these things are so—what is our duty ? Are we not urged by every motive of patriotism to unite and exert our very uttermost in promoting that virtue and knowledge without which, America must sooner or later be numbered with fallen republics. *Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Teucrici.*

But our country is not alone concerned. The world looks on us. There is now a public opinion of the world, a moral sense of nations. Our example will tell with mighty influence on the destiny of the human race. If we fulfil the designs of our brave and virtuous forefathers—the last of their generation is fast going off the stage—may they leave their mantle to their sons!—if we fulfil the designs, I say, and grand conceptions of our forefathers then will America stand forth as a glorious example, affording instruction to the nations. Her voice will be heard from the equator to either pole, and her moral influence be felt over the whole earth. But should she fail, alas, her history will be cited to prove that the people are incapable of self-government. Philanthropy as well as patriotism call us then to unite in giving elevation to the moral feeling, and improvement to the intellect of our country.

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SERMON FROM ECCLESIASTES xii. 10. FIRST PART.

(Concluded from page 26.)

*“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words.”*

II. I proceed, brethren, in the second place, to offer you my arguments for the observance of good taste in the preaching of the gospel.



And the first is that our consistency of character, and our engagements to the public, demand this strongly at our hands.

The country abounds plentifully with unlearned men employed in the work of preaching. But we of the Presbyterian body, while we yield to no other denomination of Christians in our endeavours to secure genuine piety in our preachers, say farther that "it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the church, to intrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men;" and that among us this great evil shall not be suffered to exist. This principle we avow and maintain, though we know that it brings upon us no small amount of calumny and abuse from various quarters. And what is our Presbyterian practice on the subject? In all ordinary cases, we require our candidate for the ministry, at the very time of his coming under our care, to produce evidence of his having gone through a course of liberal studies: a course which must have been pursued at the cost of much time, money, and labour. And before we license him to preach, we examine him ourselves on his literary and scientific attainments. We conduct him through a series of written trials also, to ascertain not only his knowledge of religious truth, but his qualifications, as a ripe and good scholar, for exhibiting the gospel in a manner somewhat correspondent to its dignity and grandeur.

But there are yet more facts to be taken into this account. Here is a youth hopefully converted from darkness to light, and from Satan unto God. He joins our church; loves the doctrine of salvation by free and sovereign grace through our crucified Redeemer; and tells us it is his ardent desire to spend his life with us in preaching that precious doctrine to his perishing fellow-men. We perceive too that he has talents and gifts of a respectable grade. But he is poor in this world's possessions, destitute of the means for a regular education. What do we do with him? Break our rule, and throw a raw, uneducated preacher upon the field of action? Turn him adrift, to languish in silence and obscurity, or to be led off by temptation to augment the ranks of those who labour with "a zeal not according to knowledge?" We do neither of these. We take him by the hand. We apply to our neighbours, not sparing our own purses, I trust, to furnish what is necessary for clothing, boarding, and instructing our young aspirant, while years are rolling away in the process. The noble generosity of our sisters in the Lord is called into operation, long continued and patient operation, for realizing our object. We need no couching of our eyes



# PROSPECTUS.

*The Literary and Evangelical Magazine, Heretofore published by Nathan Pollard, will continue to be published by Pollard & Goddard, at the Franklin Office, opposite the Old Market, Richmond, Virginia.*

AT the commencement of the Eighth Volume of the LITERARY AND EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE, the attention of the Public, is respectfully invited, to that Work. It is, perhaps, neither requisite, nor proper, to exhibit the testimonials of approbation which have been given to it, by men of the first character, for intelligence and respectability. Every such Work should rest entirely on its own merits; and if these be insufficient to sustain it, there is no room to expect the enlargement, or even the continuance of its patronage.

The impression has prevailed to some extent, that in consequence of the removal of the Editor, from this city, the publication of the Magazine would be suspended. It is indeed true, that since that event, some embarrassment has arisen in the conduct of the Work, owing to the irregularity of intercourse, between this place, and that of his residence, and to other causes, which it is scarcely worth while to explain. To remedy this inconvenience, a change was proposed in its arrangements, which has been effected to the satisfaction of all who are concerned. A gentleman in Richmond, will attend to those details of the Editorial department, which can be managed only here; and this circumstance will rather increase than lessen the facilities of the late Editor, for contributing to the pages, and the interest of the Work. Several other gentlemen also, have encouraged, a reliance upon them, for periodical contributions of matter. No view, therefore, of the subject, now possessed, will lead to a discontinuance of the publication. And it will be the aim of those who conduct it, to maintain the reputation, it has already acquired; and, in every practicable way, to increase its tendency to be useful.

It is believed that no Religious or Literary Magazine, is published in any of the States, South, or West of Virginia; while in the opposite direction there are several of highly respectable character. To supply in some degree this deficiency, as well as that which existed in this State, was the original design of the Evangelical and Literary Magazine. This object will, still be prosecuted, by adapting its materials, chiefly, to the state of things, in the South, and West; without, however, impairing its character for general usefulness.

**TERMS:**—The Literary and Evangelical Magazine, conducted by a number of Gentlemen, will be published Monthly, in the City of Richmond, at *Three Dollars a year in advance*. Notes of non-specie paying Banks are not received in payment, except at their depreciated value.

Each number contains 56 octavo pages, neatly printed, folded, stitched, and covered; and is issued at the close of the month. With the Number for December, is given a Title-page and an Index to the Volume, which consists of about 700 pages.

Any Person who will become responsible for Six Copies of the Magazine, shall have the Seventh, *gratis*.

The Subscribers will be furnished with the Numbers from the commencement of the present year, or from the beginning of the Work if they desire it; and any person may decline taking the Work, at the close of the year, by giving notice on, or before the 30th November, to the Publishers, or any Agent, and paying up arrearages.

Communications, *Post-paid*, may be sent to POLLARD AND GODDARD, Richmond, Virginia.



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also in

Southern Literary Messenger,

Vol. I, pp. 282-290<sub>x</sub>



